



City of Seattle
Seattle Parks and Recreation

Date: December 7, 2011

Dear Community Member,

We heard a lot from the hundreds of you who came out to our 27 October and November public meetings to talk about how to move forward with our community center operations, and a lot of what we heard was great ideas. Thanks for coming to your community center's meeting.

For the northwest geographic group, we heard a lot of emphasis on youth and teen programs, before and after school care, senior programs, programs for families and keeping programs that support themselves. People want us to stop cutting the budget, but that unfortunately is not a realistic option. The community is ready to step up and help with outreach, volunteering, recruiting advisory council members, and looking for new revenue sources. Suggestions included surveying the community, working more closely with schools, and providing volunteer tutors.

In northeast Seattle, priorities are youth and teens, before and after school programs, senior programs, and programs that are self-sustaining. Participants suggested Parks not provide duplicative programs within a geographic area. Community members are willing to do outreach, volunteer, look for fund sources, and join the advisory councils. Participants suggested partnering with local schools and holding regular combined advisory council meetings within the geographic group.

At the meeting for central community centers, the emphasis is on youth and teens, seniors, before and after school programs, and programs that support themselves. This group also suggested not duplicating programs within the geographic area and trying to avoid staff turnover. The participants expressed willingness to do outreach, look for fund sources, volunteer, join an advisory council and establish partnerships with schools. A unique suggestion from this group is to create a community center foundation to help support community center operations.

In West Seattle, the order of priority is youth and teens, seniors, before and after school programs, and programs that are self-sustaining. This group also suggested avoiding duplication in programming within the geographic area and expressed a willingness to do outreach, use the center more, volunteer, and serve on an advisory council.

Southwest Geographic Team - Community Center specific priority highlights:

Alki

- Health/wellness and fitness programs, children's programs, senior and lifelong learning classes and programs, school age care, facility maintenance, affordability, dance and art classes, special events, utilizing volunteers, programs for all ages, safe place for teens, marketing, drop-in programs and maintaining access to the gym.

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Delridge

- Youth sports activities, senior programs, morning classes and activities, computer classes/lab, community outreach, marketing, neighborhood events, preschool programs, maintaining good instructors, utilizing community volunteers, youth and teen programs, community partners.

Hiawatha

- Lifelong recreation programs, childcare and pre-school programs, youth and teen programs, community activities and special events, building and park maintenance, programs serving the most amount of families/people, collaboration with ARC, additional open hours.

High Point

- Improving marketing, scholarships and affordable programs, after school programs for youth and teens, programs that meet community needs, summer programs/camps for youth and teens, targeted outreach to youth in the community, community partnerships, life skills/academic focus for youth, senior programs, collaborating with other community centers.

South Park

- Continuing STEPS Youth Summer program, South Park Action Agenda, middle school and teen focused programs, Late Night programs, youth employment and service learning opportunities, utilizing neighborhood resources and working collaboratively, senior programs, awareness of gang issues, family involvement through programs and volunteering, ARC programming, early education programs, scholarships.

Southwest

- Communication with the community, facility safety and cleanliness, accessibility, healthy activities for all ages and abilities, senior fitness programs, scholarships, maximizing the use of the community center for all, partnerships with schools, training and using more volunteers, youth civic engagement.

These trends emerged from the notes across the city:

- A desire to lobby the City Council to restore hours and avoid budget cuts. While this is every citizen's right and very understandable, it unfortunately does not acknowledge the reality in which we find ourselves.
- A desire to vary the programming at the centers within each geographic area so that there are as few duplications as possible.
- A desire to work more closely with local neighborhood schools and PTAs to create partnerships, get information out about programs, and involve more parents.
- A desire to take advantage of "natural" partnerships waiting to happen, e.g., with Neighborhood House at High Point Community Center and between centers and the new ropes challenge course at Camp Long.
- A desire for more outreach using social media, email lists, local blogs, and other tools, while keeping the digital divide in mind and addressing it.

Possibly most heartening of the trends is people's willingness to roll up their sleeves and volunteer in many different areas from helping put on special events to tutoring in areas where volunteers have expertise.

We look forward to the next steps in planning programming and operations in your geographic group, and to implementing your great ideas. To keep up with progress on implementation of the new model, please check in any time at <http://seattle.gov/parks/centers/operations.htm>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Williams", written in a cursive style.

Christopher Williams